

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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INTRODUCTION

I would like to begin this issue with a text linking the fall of the Wall with the ungoing war in Ukraine..

Martin Parsons sent to me an update of his activities on behalf of war children.

A poem written by a Dutch resistance fighter in WWII moves me always a lot, I publish it in this issue.

I insert a short text of rabbi Jonathan Sacks as an introduction to a report on research in family history

Next I publish a text about Marian who lived through the WWII in The Hague.

I quote some paragraphs from the book of Bessel van der Kolk 'The body keeps the score' as an introduction to a review of a recently published book written by Dr Peter Heintz, for years a reader of the IB.

Gudrun Eisner, also one of our readers circle, published a book about her life as a Lebensborn child

Juri Meda sent to me the announcement of a Conference in Prague.

Nina Siegal wrote a book about her study of 7 war diaries, written by people in different positions during the war. I found a review in the internet and I attach an impressing interview with her, found at another site.

He was the Dutch 'Schindler', but Jan Zwartendijk was almost forgotten in the Netherlands. He is now again in the picture.

Bureaucracy is often an obstacle for war victims. I know that many of the war children experienced that, during the war or later on, when researching the story of their lives. The bureaucracy of the Dutch ABC is stunning and is, I think, a more or less example of all kind of other authorities or institutions that forgot they had the task to help victims..

Maria Marchetta drawn my attention to the movie about the lost train.

I hope that the articles will give you interesting information. Do not forget to inform me of any change in your address. The deadline for the next issue is October 10.

Warm regards

Gonda Scheffel-Baars

NOVEMBER 1989 MAY 2023

In November 1989, I participated in a symposium at the Wuppertal University in Germany. The presentations were interesting and sometimes emotional. The work with war children was only just beginning, at least at the international level. Not everything went as smoothly as it was planned. During the weekend the elevators were not functioning for instance: we had to climb the stairs to the 15th floor(!). We discussed psychological and social after effects of the WWII, almost 45 years after the war ended.

At some moment one of the participants who had listened to the news broadcast on radio, came in and said: 'They opened the border between East and West Berlin.'. We spoke a moment about this in fact breaking news, but then continued the scheduled program as if nothing special had happened.

Looking back, I am amazed that none of us caught the reality of that moment, a change in the course of history. We were discussing a war and were hardly impressed by one of the most important changes in the political situation in the world. We simply did not realize that we missed an extra-ordinary event. Nobody went in search of a TV set, nobody said: 'Stop, now we have to follow the actual events, we have to experience them'. Only when we came home did we become aware of the dimensions of what had happened.

Nowadays I feel a little bit like then. I fill the pages of this International Bulletin with stories related to WWII and its aftermath. But right now there is a war that touches not only Russia and Ukraine. How can we continue to discuss the past when the actual present is so serious?

For a while I want to focus on now and here. Not at the bombings, the missiles, the drones and the dead or wounded people. Everyone can see the disaster at TV and on internet. I also don't want to speak about the attitude of many people who continue their lives as if there is nothing happening over there. I feel irritated by advertising slogans telling where to buy the newest pencil for mascara, or the wauws about the newest clothing collection or the newest electric toy trains for children. Is it still the time to let our attention be drawn by such unimportant things? Maybe I am so much obsessed by war events and victims, that I cannot live light-heartedly like so many other people?

I want to speak about two wonderful Ukrainian girls.

When surfing on YouTube I came across a clip of the Got Talent Espana show. A dance teacher introduced a girl who had recently started to visit his school. Zlata had found a safe place in Espana after her flight with her family from the terror of war. The dance teacher had immediately noted how talented she was and got her permission to enroll her in the GTE. A jury member asked her if she had a special person to whom she would like

to dedicate her performance. She answered very positively: 'Yes, to all the children who had to stay in Ukraine and to all the Ukrainians'. Tears welled up, but she could find back her calmness. What we saw next was wonderful. She was so in tune with the music, each step and jump was precise. She whirled over the stage, as graceful as in a fairy tale. The crowd was enthusiastic and two of the jury members were in tears. One of them tried to speak to her, said something about a mother (she was herself one), and Zlata stood there, proud of her performance and glad and also somewhat amazed about the applause, She said: 'Do never give up your dreams' and 'I am so grateful that I can live here in Spain now and that I have the privilege to represent my country in this contest'. At the one hand it was so full of joy, yet at the other hand it was heartbreaking. Zlata got the golden buzzer, the straight entree to the finale.

At the same site I found the performance of Angelina, a refugee from Ukraine like Zlata. Her mother told how they had woken up when the helicopters came flying over their city. She showed some pictures of a ruined town. Her daughter, Angelina, 15 years old, had stopped singing when the war started. They fled and found a shelter in Spain. There they found a music school and Angelina entered the courses of singing, Her teacher discovered her talent and they decided to participate in the GTE contest. Angelina was fully aware of the difficult situation in Ukraine, therefore she wanted to sing an Ukrainian song and 'in such a way that people will feel what I feel.' She has a beautiful voice and her performance was impressive. She got the four yesses she needed to go to the next round.

What impressed me the most was their mental strength, their motivation to do something for their country in whatever way, the resilience with which they could focus on their performance and forget for some extraordinary minutes the horror they had seen and that still burned in their eyes, One of the jury members said to his colleague: 'Imagine what those eyes have seen! Certainly things they should not have seen at their age'.

In his book 'The body keeps the score,' psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk describes a couple of methods and therapies applied with men and women who have lived through a traumatic event. Trauma isolates a person, the rhythm of life is obstructed. One of the therapies helps people to tune in with their environment again through coming into motion , the rhythm of wanderings, singing or making music (or dance GSB). Especially when these activities are a shared activity with others, the healing influence can arrive soon. Trauma's can't be healed, but therapies can give people more joy in their life and more resilience. Zlata and Angelina intuitively found their ways in expressing their feelings by focusing on art.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars



UPDATE

Professor Martin Parsons. PhD. FRHistS

Those of you who know me will be aware that over the past 35 years my war-child work has taken me to many countries. On my travels I have met some remarkable people who have overcome personal, environmental and conflict related trauma in order to cope with the rigours of everyday life and I have always been amazed by their resilience and in some cases their sense of humour.

I started this work in the mid-eighties concentrating on war children affected by World War Two but since then I have dealt with the Syrian boat children arriving in the UK, Italy, Spain, and Romania as part of a three-year funded EU project, those affected by the Afghan and Iraq conflicts and now, when I hoped I might retire, the Ukrainian children. Along the way I have also advised NATO Chiefs of Staff in Mons on how to provide support to children upset and traumatised by the deployment of their parents to war zones.

It has been an interesting journey but one which has come at a personal cost. I have received death threats, been physically assaulted, and experienced my own mental health issues; the latter caused by working closely with those suffering from psychological and physical trauma and giving them the opportunity to off-load.

A few years ago I co-founded the charity Beyond Conflict with Edna Fernandes which originally concentrated on the problems in Iraq but now has a wider brief. (beyond-conflict.co.uk) Our aim was to bring medical practitioners and psychologists over to the UK and train them here in how to deal with the problems faced by children so they could return to work with them in their own areas. It has been successful to an extent but like everything else it has been restricted by funding and in some cases those in authority within the countries who have not recognised the importance of the work. Their lack of interest has meant that support has been limited.

As a result of my extensive research I have recently been asked by various local and national institutions to advise on the present influx of Ukrainian families arriving in the UK. Seventy families of boys from the school I attended as a child, Reading School, volunteered to take refugees at the very beginning of the conflict. Before they even entered the country I led an introductory workshop session on what families could expect when the children arrived. Since then the school team has worked hard to establish and maintain a support network for those taking part.

What still surprises me is how little the general public understands about the issues surrounding these displaced children and families, especially when they hear that they are being accommodated in hotels. What they don't realise is that these are transit camps in all but name. The hotel features, apart from the basic requirements, have all been stripped out and families are often living in single rooms with limited access to the 'outside' world. Many children are able to go to the local schools but even then some struggle with the language and culture. A lot of the adults are unable to find work and few have the option or opportunity to interact with the local community. The children have little or no play areas within the 'hotel' which is one of the prime requirements in the UN Rights of the Child and overall the process of moving the families into more suitable accommodation is slow.

In the main those Ukrainians who have been hosted by families have had a much better experience. However, it will be interesting to see how the situation evolves now the war is into its second year and there is little likelihood that it will end in the very near future. It is already clear that there are some administrative complications which need to be sorted out quickly.

Local schools are taking on a lot of the social welfare responsibilities and some have attempted to help assimilate families by offering support groups and language classes. However, as school finances are limited one wonders how long this can continue without government help. Unfortunately like the Syrians and Afghan groups before them there is no longer the interest in the Press or the media that there was when they first arrived so they are no longer headline news.

In some areas of the country there is not enough support for the host families and one wonders what the long-term effects on family units will be. We know from experience that there will be more than a few. Some individuals and organisations try to do all they can to make sure hosts and guests get the support they require but those of us who are experts in this field know it will not be as easy as the authorities would have people believe.

There will be a lot to do even when the conflict reaches a peaceful conclusion but unlike previous wars there is enough evidence available to demonstrate what should be put in place now to alleviate any potential problems in the future. However, it goes without saying that the extent of the 'fall-out' will depend very much on how much the countries involved listen to and act on the recommendations. Maybe I am not going to retire anytime soon.

A NATION YIELDING TO TYRANTS

All those who're present here,
the living and the dead,
the distance of a hand wide separating us,
we're all summoned to court -

Commemorate your loved one laid to rest,
your brother, friend or father,
but give your eyes a broader sight,
look at the land, at all humanity,
and listen to this message:

We all stand here in court
to choose good, to choose evil,
a nation giving in to tyrants,
will lose more than life and belongings,
the light blacks out.

Hendrik Mattheus van Randwijk

Quote from one of rabbi **Jonathan Sacks'** weekletters

The American writer Bruce Feiler recently published a best-selling book entitled *The Secrets of Happy Families*. It's an engaging work that uses research largely drawn from fields like team-building, problem-solving and conflict resolution, showing how management techniques can be used at home also to help make families cohesive units that make space for personal growth.

At the end, however, he makes a very striking and unexpected point: "The single most important thing you can do for your family may be the simplest of all: develop a strong family narrative." He quotes a study from Emory University that the more children know about their family's story, "the stronger their sense of control over their lives, the higher their self-esteem, the more successfully they believe their family functions."

A family narrative connects children to something larger than themselves. It helps them make sense of how they fit into the world that existed before they were born. It gives them the starting-point of an identity. That in turn becomes the basis of confidence. It enables children to say: This is who I am. This is the story of which I am a part. These are the people who came before me and whose descendant I am. These are the roots of which I am the stem reaching upward toward the sun.

RESEARCH IN FAMILY STORY

Stichting Werkgroep Herkenning organised for its members a meeting round the theme: 'Tell the story of your family to your kids.' Four members presented their researches and its outcomes.

Michael Schuling spoke about his research in the framework of the GENealogy. The CBG, the organisation for genealogy, invited him to present his journey in the past of his family in the famous De la Mar theatre in Amsterdam.

His research started when he wanted to know more about the 'ignored past' of his grandmother. When he was with his parents in Germany during holidays, he, still a child, discovered in his father's passport German names: Gunther Hans Schuling, born June 21, 1941. He was amazed although his parents had told him that his father was born in Germany, and that was all they told him.. The myth had landed in his family that his grandmother had been raped by a German officer. Michael's mother did not believe this story and at some moment she discovered a picture of a man in the SS uniform. His father did not want to hear the details.

This triggered Michael to do research on his grandfather. He found out that his father was born in the Lebernsborn Clinic Heim Hochland in Steinhöring, Michael found a birth document in which his grandfather recognised a child as his: Michael's father. He found the dossiers of his grandmother and his grandfather, and pictures at the backside of one of them was written: In lieblicher Erinnerung (a lovely memory).. The SS man was named Gunther Further, in further research the name Gunther Hans Kneissler. appeared. His mother had married, just before the war, with Allard Weddepohl who was fallen at the first day of the war. Michael found a text written by his grandmother in which she told that she had had a relationship with a German, Gunther Fritz Robert Kneissler, born in 1910. Michael found this information at the Bundesarchiv. His grandfather had been involved in the Arbeitsdienst, later in the Wehrmacht and for a short period in the Waffen SS. After the capitulation he surrendered himself to the Allies. December 4, 1945 he was released from prison. His grandfather was in 1941 a married man with three children. Michael contacted

one of the legal sons of his grandfather and he met the whole family in April 2022. His research made him feel more complete because the white pages in the familybook had received words telling a story. Therefore his mission is to convince people to start a research and to be patient, because the journey is long and sometimes arousing irritations or despair.

'Contact archives, look in the internet, do not give in, it is so healing to have your family come out of the dark and ignored past.' is his advice.

A documentary of the life story of Michael's grandmother has been broadcast in one of the first months of this year.

Sipke Witteveen is one of the official speakers of the National Support Group WWII This group is initiated by Commemoration Camp Westerbork and started in 1999. Westerbork has a complex history. From 1939 on it was a refugee camp for Jews. When the Germans occupied the Netherlands it became a transfer camp for Jews who were sent to a couple of concentration camps. After the war it became an internment camp for collaborators with the Germans and after 1951 it became a refugee camp for people from the islands of the Molukken in the former Dutch colony of the East-Indies. The Commemoration Camp opened its doors in 1984.

Sipke's mission is to convince people they should tell the stories about their experiences during the war and its aftermath. The speakers visit pupils in the two last forms of the elementary school and students at the colleges. The war generation is becoming smaller and smaller. So the number of the second generation in the speakers team is rising and even people of the grandchildren generation joined the speakers team. There are 210 members, but the Support Group is trying to get more speakers in the team and give them a short training how to prepare a presentation. It is evident that the personal stories land in the minds and the hearts of the pupils, they will never forget these impressive stories. The stories connect the present with the past and show that the past has not disappeared but is still pretty alive in the families of resistance fighters, of Jews, of people who lived in the Japanese internment camps, of collaborators, of mixed German and Dutch families, of families who still mourn their family members who died as a result of fighting or bombings on the city where they lived. Especially people living in the country and villages are more than welcome in the speakers team. Sipke; 'We are the voice of the past, we are the people who hand over the stories to the next generation. We can't stop this project, because we need to tell the stories. If we don't they will be gone for good.'

Martijn Groeneveld is the son and grandson in a half German family. His mother came to the Netherlands after the war was ended. Although her family did not support Hitler and his Party, they were 'good' Germans, the people in the village where they came to live could not (yet) see nuances. So Martijn's mother was bullied and mistreated, not knowing why their school comrades acted so hatefully. Fortunately there was no frustrating silence as in so many other families after the war. Nevertheless, Martijn noted in his behaviour an echo of that of his mother. It is as if he treads on eggs, always alert to do no harm to any people or in any form. He is for 1/8 German and he wants to have the freedom to say without being ashamed: 'I have also a German family'. Crucial were to him questions like: who were my grandparents? What did they do, what did they think? What is the story I want to share with children and students? At least a complex, full colour story, not the black and white that contained so much injustice to his mother and grandparents.

A German grandfather has had a huge impact on the family of Alex Dekker who started a research. He visited archives, found pictures in his grandmothers sewing case and tried to reconstruct the family history. Fifteen years ago he published a book on his family and met with sometimes arrogant or teasing reactions. He asked himself: what identity do I have,

what can we learn from my grandfathers story? What story do I want to hand over to the coming generations? Alex has a complex picture of history. What are our goals in life, what are the images we have in our minds and how did we get them? It is likely that Alex would write now a different book than fifteen years ago, because he has now more distance to the story.

In the discussions after the presentations, people underlined the importance of stories also for their own children, the after-grandchildren. It is a must to find out what your trauma is and to find ways to cope with it..The next generation need to have roll models, stories from which they can pick up patrons of thinking and behaving to build their identity with

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MARIAN'S WAR

Marian was 4 years old when she woke up in the early morning of May 10, 1940. She heard a noise that she could not identify. She felt scared and slipped out of her bed to seek shelter with her parents; they were, however, still asleep. She snuggled herself in the bed of her elder sister who after some minutes awoke. They both listened to the loud whistle of falling bombs and explosions and could not think of anything better to do than to lie in bed and feel scared. When their parents awoke, they heard their father opening the curtains and then saying one word: war.

Together they looked out the window, and saw an overwhelming number of planes flying overhead. They lived in The Hague, a coastal city, and, although not the capital of the Netherlands, it was the home of the Dutch government. There were three airfields around the city-- Ypenburg, Valkenburg and Ockenburg--all three crucial for the logistics of the German army. The Germans had planned to capture them rather easily, but that was not the case. There was more resistance than they had calculated, and moreover their planes had not landed at the correct place. Within a few days, however, the Germans had control over the three airfields. But the delay during the first days of the war hampered the German army for weeks. There was a special command group with the order to arrest the Queen (Wilhelmina) and the government. But the group came too late. In the early morning hours the government and the Queen had left The Hague in a couple of cars, on their way to the southern coastal province of Zeeland, where a ship was waiting to bring them to the United Kingdom.

At first, the Germans behaved rather friendly toward the Dutch people after General Winkelmann had capitulated. They planned to influence the citizens in a calm way and increase the number of Nazi supporters. That did not happen and gradually the measures became harsher. Many Dutch families were forced to house a German soldier or officer. In this way Herr Brecht, sergeant major in the German Army, had received a room in Marian's family house. He was a calm and decent man, always alert not to make noise when he went upstairs to his room. When he was ordered to move to another place, he gave a part of his postage stamp collection to Marian's elder brother Alf.

Meanwhile, the family had become accustomed to the noise of airplanes. The Germans wanted to protect the coast against a British invasion. Soon after beginning the war they started to build the Atlantic Wall as a safe border along the dunes of the coast close to The Hague. By 1942, however, they wanted to have an even wider stretch of the coastal city

included in their defense system. Several residential areas had to be evacuated by the citizens, and so more than 10,000 people had to find a new home. Marian's parents were forced to leave, but they found that they could hire two floors of a house in the south of the city, where her father could go to his work and the children could continue to attend their schools. Marian's father was a senior engineer at the Waterstaat, an organisation responsible for the safety of the coast and the rivers, partly under the supervision of the Department of Water Control. The employees were respected by the Germans, because they controlled the safety of the Dutch landscape, which lies partly under sea level.

On March 3, 1944 the Allies bombed a residential area of The Hague. It was a mistake, for they had planned to bomb a military depot. People became increasingly aware of their vulnerability: now it was that area, next time it could be theirs.

Because of the war there had been a distribution system set up for food, clothes, shoes, fuel and soap. At first Marian's family did not lack food, because they had relatives living on a farm in the northern part of the country who regularly sent them some sugar beets. These beets were cooked for a couple of days which then turned them into a brown sweet syrup. When the circumstances deteriorated, Marian's elder sister and brother were sent to live with these family members on their farm. Their journey lasted 28 hours, but they arrived there in good health. Marian's parents had now distribution coupons of the two absent children, so they could receive their portions as well. Nevertheless, in the end they had to take meals from the soup kitchen. Marian, by then 7 years old, had the task of going to the serving line with her bucket. She tried to find a place between adults because they created a cell of warmth. When she had received their portions, she ran to her house, to keep the food as warm as possible. But they did not shut their eyes for the needs of others. Two old ladies came to the family twice a week to eat something more than their own portion. When Marian's father saw a boy collapse on the street and that nobody came to assist him, he helped the boy up, and took him to their home. The boy stayed with them for several weeks.

The situation in The Hague became worse. In school there was no heating, there was a lack of paper, pens, books, etc., and very often the pupils had to hide under the tables when the alarm signal was heard. At some moment the schools closed their doors. Many children didn't have clothes or shoes that fit, so walking outside in the cold autumn and winter had become almost impossible.

The aerial war around the city continued and increased in 1944. The Germans had started to launch their V2's and the Allies responded with bombing. In the beginning people had been afraid of them but after some time they became accustomed to the launching of the V2's. Many people did not go to the shelters and instead just continued their activities. One afternoon while Marian was playing in the streets with a number of children, a missile went off course.

Marian wrote: 'This time the missile flew very low and continued on its way as if it would penetrate our house. My mother stood behind the window, scared and frozen. I ran from one side of the street to the other, because the heat of the missile became unbearable. I feared dying because of the heat. At the very last moment the missile lifted a little bit, flew over the roof and exploded in the street behind the houses. You can't imagine how long such a missile is. And it has a long and broad tail, as long as the missile itself. The scary slow motion of this thing just over our roof and a moment later an earsplitting explosion, caused the splintering of all the glass of the windows in the area and made me frozen by fear. I stood in the middle of our street, I heard people crying. I was sure that the street

behind me had disappeared, and I had no courage to go to our house, fearing that it would collapse or would catch fire. I was grateful that none of our small group was hurt.' Marian was in severe shock. She had stood eye to eye with death.

Liberation day was less glorious than one had hoped. There was music in the streets, there was dancing, but many people were exhausted from hunger and cold. In that last winter thousands of people had died from starvation.

In the 1980's, war traumas received increased recognition. The government founded ICODO, an institute for help and documentation of war victims. The target group was first of all the resistance fighters who risked their lives for the freedom of the country. Jewish war victims also belonged to this group, as well as people who had been imprisoned by the Japanese in the Dutch colony of East-Indies. These groups were the first to start their own regular meetings for reunions and mutual help. But for years, nobody had thought about the ordinary civilians who had been damaged in body, spirit or belongings. These citizens only started meeting ten years after the other groups had begun, and they had to struggle to get the government to recognize their need for help.

In the war victims groups, the focus was almost totally on the experiences of the adults. For that reason their children started their own groups. The civilian war victims, however, did not create a self-help group for their children. Some of them were members of KOMBI, a mixed self-help group where war children from any background were welcome. Regretably, KOMBI had to stop its activities in 2000.

Marian has never received help for coping with the trauma of her scary experiences. But after all, she was a war child, wasn't she?

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(Marian's experiences are described in the book about her father's life and work for Waterstaat, with the title 'Johan van Veen, Meester van de zee' (Johan van Veen, Master of the Sea.)

EVEN THE PROFESSIONAL WAS AMAZED

(some paragraphs from the book 'The Body Keeps the Score' by Bessel van der Kolk, p. 298, 299)

But what was most unusual was how Pessso created tableaux – or as he called them 'structures' – of the protagonist's past. As the narratives unfolded, group participants were asked to play the roles of significant people in the protagonists' lives, so as the parents and other family members so that their inner world began to take form in three-dimensional space. Group members were also enlisted to play the ideal, wished-for parents who would provide the support, love and protection that had been lacking at critical moments. Protagonists became the directors of their own play, the past they never had, and they clearly experienced profound physical and mental relief after these maginery scenarios. Could this technique instill imprints of safety and comfort alongside those of terror and abandon, decades after the original shaping of mind and brain?

Intrigued with the promise of Pessso's work, I eagerly accepted his invitation to visit his hilltop farmhouse in southern New Hampshire. After lunch beneath an old oak tree, Al asked me to join him in his red clapboard barn, now a studio to do a structure. I'd spent several years in psychoanalysis, so I did not expect any major revelations. I was a settled

professional man in my forties with my own family and I thought of my parents as two elderly people who were trying to create a decent old age for themselves. I certainly did not think they had a major influence to me.

Since there were no other people available for role-play, AI began by asking me to select an object or a piece of furniture to represent my father. I chose a gigantic black leather couch and asked AI to put it upright about eight feet in front of me, slightly to the left. Then he asked if I'd like to bring my mother into the room as well, and I chose a heavy lamp, approximately the same height as the upright couch. As the session continued the space became populated with the important people in my life: my best friend a tiny Kleenex-box, to my right, my wife, a small pillow next to him, my two children two more tiny pillows

After a while I surveyed the projection of my internal landscape; two hulking, dark and threatening objects representing my parents and an array of miniscule objects representing my wife, children and friends. I was astounded; I had re-created my inner image of my stern Calvinistic parents from the time I was a little boy. My chest felt tight, and I'm sure that my voice sounded even tighter. I could not deny what my spatial brain was revealing. The structure had allowed me to visualize my implicit map of the world.

When I told AI what I had just uncovered, he nodded and asked if I would allow him to change my perspective. I felt my skepticism return, but I liked AI and was curious his method, so I hesitantly agreed. He then interposed his body between me and the couch and lamp, making them disappear from my line of sight. Instantaneously I felt a deep release in my body – the constriction in my chest eased and my breathing became relaxed. That was the moment I decided to become Pessó's student.

PETER HEINL: Intuitive Diagnostik, Unbewusste Kommunikation, Zeitlinie und die Algebra der Seele

(Intuitive Diagnostic Subconscious Communication, Time Line and the Algebra of the Soul) ed. Thinkaon

In this new book psychiatrist and therapist Pieter Heint continues the research of his subconsciousness and that of other people. In his last book 'Licht in den Ozean des Unbewussten' (Light in the Ocean of the Subconsciousness) he started to try to understand what hidden communication finds place between the subconsciousness of people. He paraphrases in this book two cases he already presented in his last book. He refers anew to them because they are useful for the understanding of this hidden communication. I summarise one of them

In a workshop with therapists, one of the participants wanted to do a structure. He sat down in the middle of the circle and the structure was made. It was, however, not satisfying and the mood of the group in the room was low, so was Peter's. He paced through the room in search of something, he didn't know what. Suddenly his eye was caught by a roll of tape on the window-sill. He picked it up and stuck it to the door handle. Then he stuck it on the left shoulder of Mr T. Next he stuck the tape to the right shoulder and then to the ground. He had no link to understand what he 'structured'. He asked Mr T whether he, had experienced at some moment of his life that he was bounded. T's answer came immediately. All through his life he had felt being not free, but bounded.. As a three months old baby he had had pneumonia and because he was restless, they had bound his arms and legs to the bed. It wasn't his own memory but what his parents had told him and

which he had forgotten. For a long time. Once he had told this traumatic experience in this workshop group, he felt relieved..

Why and how could Peter 'know' the 'forgotten' memories of other people? Two of his own dreams helped him to make progress in the exploration of his subconsciousness. He saw that images in his subconsciousness are well organised, chronologically and countable. Images research other images on similarity and if found, they link to each other. The images form a very detailed structure. When studying medicine Peter spent hours with observing the wonderful fine structures in every muscle string. In a similar way the images of the inner world are organised. Since new images generate from experiencing the outer world, there is an exchange between outer and inner world and between the structures in other people's mind. On the basis of these processes the intuitive diagnostic is build. Rational thinking doesn't play a role, it is an exchange between the subconsciousness of people. This diagnostic method could be helpful in cases of traumatic but forgotten events. Since most of the used therapeutic methods cannot grasp the subconscious signals, the intuitive diagnostic could fill the gap.

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BOOK BY GUDRUN EISNER

At last it is there! At the begin of March my book '**Heime für Himmlers Väter**' (Maternities for Himmler's Fathers) has been published in which I tell my story.

It starts as follows::

'When I was 11 years old my mother forgot her key bundle when she left our home. I couldn't withstand the seduction to read at last what I was supposed not to read. I opened the forbidden cupboard and I read everything what my mother had hidden for me. The sentence at the last page of my birth certificate that I was born in a Lebensborn home, I didn't read it or I did not understand it and therefore I forgot it.'

The book has 259 pages and is published by the Gerhard Hess Verlag and it costs 19,90 euro. Whoever lives in Germany and order this book it will be send without fee. Who lives abroad has to pay the postage costs.

The title focus on selected and chosen men who impregnated unmarried women. Criteria were being member of the SS or other „valuable“ man, p.e. my father: rich, officer of a savings bank, heir of a well known farm, „Meierhof“.

Himmler's project enabled these men to hide their indiscretions and so avoid gossips and scandals by the jilted pregnant women. The homes were not founded for the promotion of blond - blue-eyed, nor founded to increase the population.

The „normal“ married women were spouses of SS men.„Lebensbornkind“ signifies a child of an unmarried woman The others are children born in an SS maternity.

Gudrun Eisner,

Perpignan, France

Her book is a mix of an autobiography and factual research. Especially the way in which she built up this book is exciting. The reader learns about her feelings of loneliness, the feeling of being betrayed, of lack of love and care from her mother, the lack of self-

confidence, emotions and feelings well known to other war children. Her book places her parents, the organisers of the Lebensborn project, Hitler and Himmler before the court in the fictive letters Gudrun wrote to them putting in words her accusations. Her true feelings have found an expressive way to free her of most of the weight of the past.

GSB

CONFERENCE IN PRAGUE, 19-20 June 2023

A CHILD IN TIMES OF NEED AND IN HOPE, OVERCOMING THE DISTRESS OF WAR, EPIDEMICS, AND SOCIAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND PHYSICAL HANDICAPS IN CHILDREN AND YOUTHS

Distress, poverty, crisis (not only the current energy crisis), war, epidemics, but also aid, solidarity, hope, and support – these concepts have dominated the broader socio-political, cultural, historical, and pedagogical discourse of the last two years. The crises arising from the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine have swiftly and radically tested our confidence in the success and stability of European integration, in our ability to listen to one another and to recognize and overcome our many significant economic, cultural, and historical differences. Almost overnight, overcome our many significant economic, cultural, and historical differences. Almost overnight, we have been shown just how fragile stability and peace are, how vulnerable democracy is, and how important it is in the twenty-first century to protect and promote values such as openness, humanity, compassion, and a sense of belonging. **A Child in Times of Need and in Hope** – such is the theme of a joint conference of the National Pedagogical Museum and Library of J. A. Comenius in Prague, Faculty of Arts – Charles University Prague, the Institute of History of the Czech Academy of Sciences, and the University of Zurich and the University of Dresden employing historical reflection and contemporary pedagogical discussion to explore the complexity of coping with the menace of war, with sociocultural challenges, and with the physical, psychological, and social handicaps impacting the upbringing and education of children. The conference will take place at **the National Pedagogical Museum and Library of J. A. Comenius** in Prague from **19 to 20 June 2023**

The conference asks what educational, legislative, and institutional means and actors (individuals and groups, i.e. educators, teachers, social educators, doctors, psychologists, parents, churches, national and professional associations, and civic groups and institutions of the modern state) have used to read, respond to, and confront the hardships of war, illness, and epidemics as well as the impact of social, economic, cultural, and environmental crises and migration processes that threaten the psychological, physical, social, and moral health of children and youths and society as a whole. The conference aims to highlight the ideological, religious, political, and cultural influences that have determined discourse and efforts to safeguard the physical and mental health of the child and provide childcare regardless of whether they have been based on scientific, religious, political, or ideological grounds and have viewed the matter in terms of the development of special educational institutions and the advancement of inclusive pedagogical interests.

Languages: Czech, English, German

Venue: National Pedagogical Museum and Library of J.A. Comenius

Fee: 600 CZK (about 25 euro) to pay when arriving at the conference venue

People wanting to participate send a mail to: simek@npmk.cz

A riveting look at the story of World War II and the Holocaust through the DIARIES OF DUTCH CITIZENS, firsthand accounts of ordinary people living through extraordinary time

Based on select writings from a collection of more than two thousand Dutch diaries written during World War II in order to record this unparalleled time, and maintained by devoted archivists, 'The Diary Keepers' illuminates a part of history we haven't seen in quite this way before, from the stories of a Nazi sympathizing police officer to a Jewish journalist who documented daily activities at a transport camp.

Journalist Nina Siegal, who grew up in a family that had survived the Holocaust in Europe, had always wondered about the experience of regular people during World War II. She had heard stories of the war as a child and Anne Frank's diary, but the tales were either crafted as moral lessons — to never waste food, to be grateful for all you receive, to hide your silver — or told with a punch line. The details of the past went untold in an effort to make it easier assimilate into American life.

When Siegal moved to Amsterdam as an adult, those questions came up again, as did another horrifying one: Why did seventy five percent of the Dutch Jewish community perish in the war, while in other Western European countries the proportions were significantly lower? How did this square with the narratives of Dutch resistance she had heard so much about and in what way did it relate to the famed tolerance people in the Netherlands were always talking about? Perhaps more importantly, how could she raise a Jewish child in this country without knowing these answers?

Searching and singular, 'The Diary Keepers' mines the diaries of ordinary citizens to understand the nature of resistance, the workings of memory, and the ways we reflect on, commemorate, and re-envision the past.

Harper Collins Publishers

NINA SIEGAL:THE DIARY KEEPERS To be published by Ecco / HarperCollins

The project:

The Diary Keepers was born out of a *New York Times* article, "The Lost Diaries of War," which explored a trove of more than 2,000 diaries collected by the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies in Amsterdam. The author has chosen seven diaries from the collection, which she weaves together to tell the story of the war from varying perspectives, like a multi-character novel. They include narratives of Jews in hiding and imprisoned, a grocery store owner who became a member of the resistance, a young, unaffiliated factory worker in Amsterdam, and a police officer and Nazi collaborator who ran a special unit to hunt Jews. Taken together, their stories create a fascinating mosaic of life in the Netherlands in the five harrowing years from Germany's invasion to the end of the occupation.

From *The Diary Keepers* :in Wishing Foundation

I live about a five-minute bike ride from the Anne Frank House museum in Amsterdam, and almost every day I bike past it with my daughter on our way to her school. Before the coronavirus shutdown, hundreds of people lined up in front of the door every morning, waiting to get in, to learn about this young girl who transformed our understanding of World

War II.

I haven't yet told my 9-year-old daughter the story of Anne Frank, though she knows the vague outlines of the narrative. I feel she is too young for me to drop the whole weight of the Holocaust on her shoulders without the context of a supportive Jewish culture and community. Imagine if that's the main thing she came to understand about being Jewish — that we had to hide or be killed? Right here, on this street?

I think a lot about Anne, and how some of the people who lived on this street were the parents or the grandparents of the people who live there now — my neighbors. I reflect on how close we live to one another in this very small city, which we often call a village. People must have witnessed just about everything. Before I tell my daughter Anne's story I want to be able to answer the inevitable question that will follow: "But mommy, how is it possible that everyone else let that happen?"

What can I say about what the others were feeling as they watched the Jews get rounded up in public squares? What went through their minds as they heard the doors knocked down in the middle of the night? Some, Nazi sympathizers and collaborators, were pleased; some were decent people tormented by what they saw, but paralyzed. I need to know their minds. Then I can tell my girl.

These days, what's on my mind most often is Cornelis Komen's diary. With all the terrible things happening in the world right now — the rounding up of migrants, separation of families, famine, the Rohingya genocide — I think about how I am a witness to the world's horrors while I continue to enjoy all the small pleasures of being alive. He wrote:

"We're surrounded by nothing but rustling wheat fields, interspersed with beautiful orchards. Apples here, pears over there, and sometimes plum or cherry trees. One even more beautiful than the other. Then we reach Farmer Kerdijk van Dien, who immediately orders a box of 7.5 kilos of cherries. We sit ourselves down and start to eat. The box is empty in less than half an hour, but then we're fed up with cherries. That's the problem; if you have too much of something, it soon starts to pall....

We run a race. Van Dien loses to me. Wim beats Bert. The Willinks are the champions. Then we do some boxing. And then the boys try to wrestle Van Dien down to the ground. Not a chance. He breaks into a sweat. It's lovely getting tired this way. How wonderful life is. While in Amsterdam, the Jews are herded together like cattle. Carrying their bundles on their backs. Their blankets. They packed their things days in advance. Still, how hard their departure must have been. Parting from their familiar living rooms, their friends and acquaintances. While we are eating cherries, one basket after another. Lazing around. How lovely this place is.'

JAN ZWARTENDIJK

In 1940, the Dutch Jan Zwartendijk lived in Kaunas in Latvia representing his country as a consul. He was sent to Latvia by the Dutch government after his predecessor was called back to the Netherlands because of his pro-Nazi sympathies.

Hundreds of Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria had come to Latvia that by then still was an autonomous and neutral country. These refugees had no place to go to and Jan Zwartendijk, witnessing their vulnerable position, decided to give them the opportunity to leave Europe that became little by little a prey of the Nazis. He opened the consulate for the refugees giving them visa for the small Dutch island in the Caribbean Sea Curaçao. He was aware of the fact that probably they would probably never arrive there, nevertheless he would give them a chance to escape from Europe. Day after day, hour after hour, he signed visa, grateful with the help of the Japanese consul offering them transfer visa to Japan. The refugees could travel through the Soviet Union and Mongolia to the East.

In these first weeks of 1940 he focused solely on the visa, knowing that he had to act now because waiting could become waiting too long. He received only ten days to execute his helping plans. His decision was made all by himself, not asking advice or approval of the Dutch government. Back in the Netherlands he did not receive praise, To the contrary, he was summoned to come to the Department of Foreign Affairs where he was blamed for the fact that he had neglected the diplomatic rules. He saved the lives of approximate 10 000 Jews, but that fact was ignored.

In 2014 Jan Brokken wrote a book about Jan Zwartendijk with the title 'The people doing justice'. Members of the Parliament asked the government to rehabilitate him despite so many years since his heroic act. The government offered apologies for the unjust attitude of the former government withholding from him recognition for his rescue operation. The Holocaust Commemoration Center and Museum honored him posthumously with the title 'Righteous among the Nations'.

Latvia honored him with the Cross of Rescuers.

The Dutch Parliament member Sjoerdsma did his utmost to draw attention to the courage of the Dutch 'Schindler' He wrote an open letter to King Willem-Alexander with the request to honour Jan Zwartendijk by granting him the highest Dutch order of Knighthood. All the political parties signed the letter and although an order of Knighthood is never given posthumously, we hope that our King will positively react to this request.

Gonda Scheffel-Baars



ABC, BUREAUCRACY: AN UNACCEPTABLE OBSTACLE

ABC were the initials of an office named Afwikkelingsbureau Concentratiekampen, founded in the autumn of 1944 when the southern part of the Netherlands had been liberated. The task of this office was to provide Dutch citizens who had been imprisoned or had been taken to a concentration camp abroad with extra coupons for food and clothing. The target group was confined to political captives and only to those who came back to the Netherlands after the end of the war. In the National Archives the records of this office are preserved. The archives contain 11 500 letters, cards or even small strips of paper on which repatriated victims of the Nazis asked for extra coupons. We don't know how many requests have been successful, but it is obvious that many of them were not accepted.

The reasons many requests were not successful were often in fact unacceptable even there and then and even more nowadays. Prisoners of the concentration camp in Vught, in the southern provinces liberated in September 1944, did not receive coupons, because they remained in the Netherlands all the time and were therefore strictly speaking no repatriating people. The survivors of Bergen-Belsen who came back before May 5, 1945 did not receive coupons because only those repatriated after war ended belonged to the target group. Nationality played a crucial role. German Jews who had come to the Netherlands before the war had lost their German nationality and the time had been too short to provide them with a Dutch passport. So they did not get extra coupons... ..Sometimes two or three members of a family with Dutch nationality received extra coupons whereas the others didn't receive anything because they were stateless.

Sometimes the employees of the office replied to the requesting families that they did not belong to the group of the recognized political victims. A survivor of Auschwitz, Janina, Gross Rosen and Dachau wrote: "What kind of people do belong to the political category if not me?" He continued: 'The SS have forced me to obedience and I obeyed in order not to lose my life. I don't accept to be treated in an unjust way by my own people.'

A man who had survived Vught, Sachsenhausen and Buchenwald received a letter in which the ABC reproached him because he should have found out for himself that 'offending the German state' was no political reason....

One stateless man wrote to the ABC: 'We stateless people, did we suffer less from the cruelty in the camps than people with a Dutch passport?'

The formal way in which the requests of war victims were handled is hard to swallow. How could the ABC employees lack any kind of empathy for those people? Why to maintain the limits of the target group so strictly? One man ended his letter with: 'A bit more bread, sugar, butter and cheese is welcome. Maybe even biscuits?'

GondaScheffel-Baars

(summarized translation of an article in the NC magazine 2023. NC is the committee that organises the ceremonies on Remembranceday)

THE LOST TRAIN

(German: *Verlorener Zug*) also known as "The lost Transport" (German: *Zug der Verlorenen*), was the third of three trains that were intended to transport prisoners from the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp to Theresienstadt during the final phase of World War II as Allied troops approached the camp. The train was halted from further progress by the destroyed railway bridge at the Black-Elster river near Tröbitz. The Jewish prisoners were discovered and freed by the Red Army.

During the last weeks of World War II, the SS transported Jewish concentration camp prisoners on trains from Bergen Belsen to Theresienstadt as the Allied front pushed closer to the concentration camp. Between 6 and 11 April 1945, three transport trains with a total of around 7,500 people, deemed *Austauschjuden* ("exchange Jews") by the SS, were selected to be taken to the other camp. The selection was based on Jews who had held a high position, and could be exchanged for German prisoners of war. About one-third were Dutch Jews. The prisoners from Bergen-Belsen concentration camp were put on three trains to be transported to Theresienstadt.

Only one train reached Theresienstadt, due to a railway bridge blowing up outside of Tröbitz by allied bombing preventing the third train from completing the trip. The first was freed by American troops at Farsleben a few days after departing Bergen-Belsen while the second reached Theresienstadt. The third transport would be the one known as the Lost Train. Once Theresienstadt was no longer reachable for the train, holding around 2,500 people, the guards fled the train outside of Tröbitz.

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It would not be until 23 April that the Red Army would discover and free the prisoners. Gradually, the guards abandoned the prisoners as Allied forces approached, leaving the Russians to discover a train car filled with the bodies of those dead and close to death, with several additional prisoners seeking shelter in nearby abandoned houses. Of the prisoners, 198 were already dead from malnutrition and disease; 320 additional people would die due to complications from exhaustion and disease. It was reported by the female survivors that some Soviets who rescued them had raped many of them, as the Nazis had done previously.

Unlike the other trains that attempted to relocate Nazi prisoners, this event had some unique characteristics. It was one of the few trains that carried exclusively Jewish prisoners; many of the prisoners on board possessed purchased passports of foreign countries; and the German Jews were listed as stateless under their nationality.

Numbering among the survivors were Hannah Goslar, her sister, and 5 Dutch people who became famous after the war: Abel Herzberg, Jaap Meijer, and his two-year old son Ischa Meijer, Jona Oberski and Levie Vorst



A list of victims of the Lost Train at the Tröbitz Holocaust memorial.

In 2015, the Brandenburg State Secretary for Culture, Marin Gorholt, the residents of Tröbitz began commemorating the lives of the lost immediately after the end of World War II. She made these comments while unveiling a €78,000 exhibit on the Lost Train. This was just one of several monuments and Jewish cemeteries commemorating the numerous victims of the Lost Train, in Tröbitz and other surrounding villages.

The deaths would also be memorialized by Christian groups who set up a hiking trail along the final train's route. (There were so many notes that I quipped them. You may find the references on the Wikipedia site.)

WEBSITES

Organisation of Children of Dutch Collaborators:

www.werkgroepherkenning.nl

Organisation of Danish Children of War, Danske Krigsboern Foerening:

www.krigsboern.dk

Organization of Norwegian NS Children:

www.nazichildren.com

Krigsbarnforbundet Lebensborn, Norway:

priveadres: k.e.papendorf@jus.uio.no

Organisation of NS-children Vennetreff:

<http://www.nsbarn.no>

Riskforbundet Finska Krigsbarn: (in swedish)

www.finskakrigsbarn.se

Tapani Ross on Finnish War Children (blog)

www.krigsbarn.com

Organisation of Finnish Children of War, Seundun Sotalapset:

www.sotalapset.fi

Organisation of children of victims and children of the perpetrators:

www.one-by-one.org

Austrian Encounter, organisation for encounters between children of the victims and children of the perpetrators in Austria:

www.nach.ws

Dachau Institut Psychologie und Pädagogik:

www.Dachau-institut.de

Kriegskind Deutschland:

www.kriegskind.de

Website for the postwar-generation:

www.Forumkriegsenkel.com

Evacuees Reunion Association

www.evacuees.org.uk

Researchproject 'War and Children Identity Project', Bergen, Norway

www.warandchildren.org

Researchproject University München 'Kriegskindheit'

www.warchildhood.net

Coeurs Sans Frontières – Herzen Ohne Grenzen

www.coeurssansfrontières.com

Organisation d'enfants de guerre

www.nésdelalibération.fr

Organisation of Us-descendants in Belgium
www.usad-ww2.be

Childsurvivors of the Holocaust in Australië
www.paulvalent.com

International organisation for educational and professional development focused on themes like racism, prejudices and antisemitism
www.facinghistory.org

Aktion Sühnezeigen Friedensdienste
www.asf-ev.de

Organisation of German Lebensbornkinder
www.lebensspuren-deutschland.eu

International Network for Interdisciplinary Research on Children born of War (INIRC)
www.childrenbornofwar.org

Organisation Genocide Prevention Now
www.genocidepreventionnow.org

Basque Children of '37 Association UK
www.basquechildren.org

International Study of the Organized Persecution of Children
www.holocaustchildren.org

Partners in Confronting Collective Atrocities
www.p-cca.org

War Love Child – Oorlogsliefdekind
www.oorlogsliefdekind.nl/en

Children of Soviet Army soldiers
www.russenkinder.de

Stichting Oorlogsgetroffenen in de Oost
www.s-o-o.nl

Philippine Nikkei-Jin Legal Support Center
www.pnlsc.com

Austrian children of Afroamerican soldier-fathers
www.afroaustria.at

Organisation tracing American GI fathers
www.gitrace.org

Children in War Memorial
blog: **<http://childreninwarmemorial.wordpress.com>**

Stichting Sakura (Dutch/Indonesian/Japanese children)
<https://stichting-sakura.nl>

Stichting JIN (Indonesian/Japanese children)
<http://www.jin-info.nl>

